

HISTORY ROOM  
F. H. D.

# Seventy-Five Years' History OF THE First Baptist Church

KALAMAZOO :: MICHIGAN

1911



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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

An address delivered at the celebration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Organization of the church, March fifth to twelfth, one thousand nine hundred and eleven, by Rev. John E. Smith, Pastor of the Church :: :: :: ::



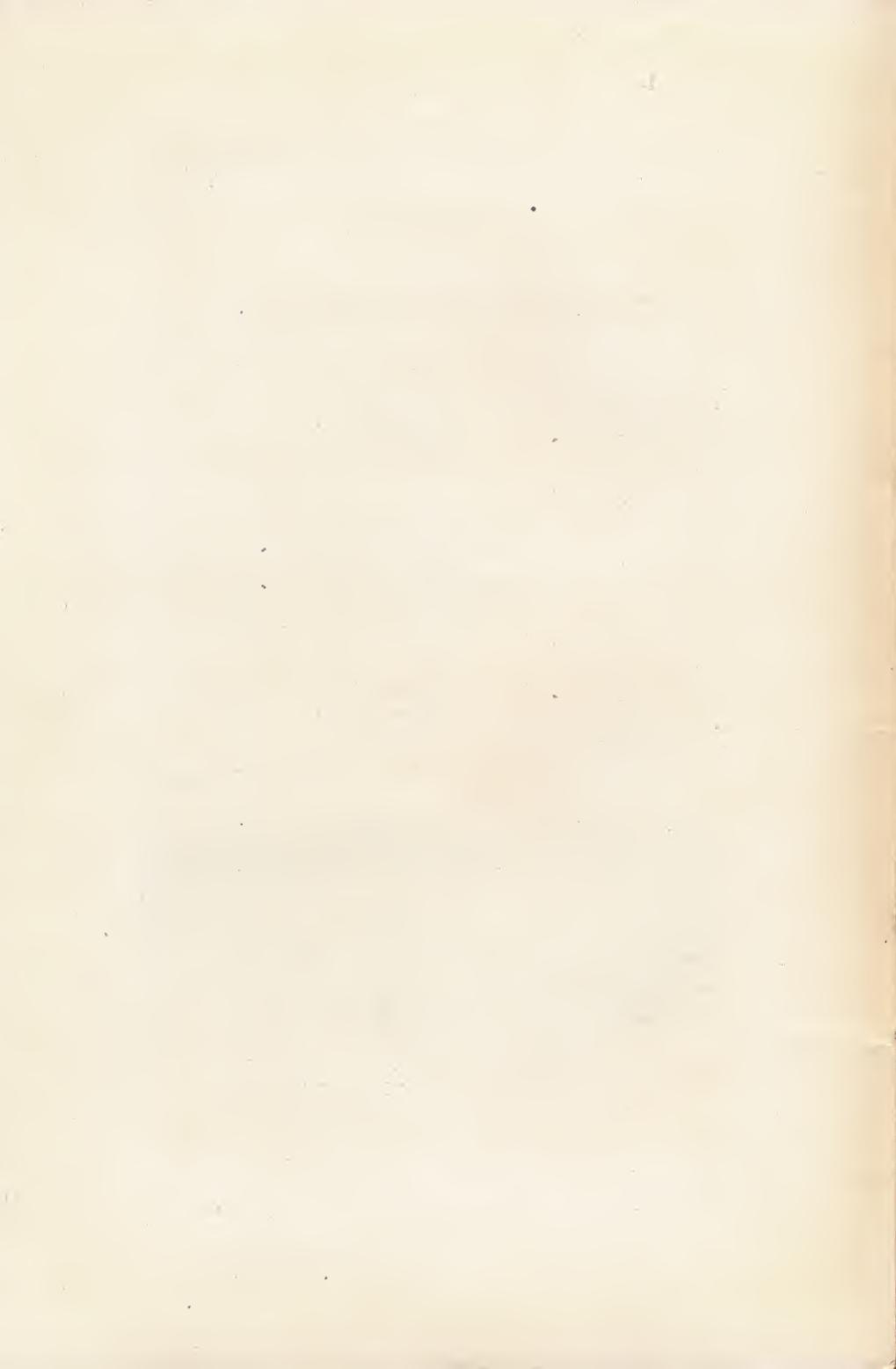
Church Building Dedicated in 1856

Seventy-Five Years' History  
OF THE  
First Baptist Church  
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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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*TEXT: John 4:38*

*"Others have labored and ye have  
entered into their labors."*

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SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS'  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

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We meet today to begin the celebration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the organization of this church. It is a notable event and one toward which we have looked with no small degree of interest.

To tell the story of these seventy-five years of church work in the time we have at our disposal this morning would mean to condense several large volumes of written records into a document that could be read in forty-five minutes; it would mean to give you some knowledge of the strong Christian men and women who have given years of service to the Kingdom of God as members of this church; it would mean to tell of self-sacrificing pastors who have regularly broken the bread of life and who have heroically stood at the helm, in all kinds of weather, guiding and steadyng the old ship; it would mean to speak of the faithful deacons and trustees and church clerks and treasurers and Sunday-school Superintendents and other officers who have had no small part in the success and progress of the church through all these years; it would mean the recalling of much of the history of the Col-

lege, so closely have the lives of these two institutions been intertwined. Some important things will have to be omitted for lack of time and some for lack of knowledge because the records of the first six years have been lost and some of those of subsequent years are quite defective.

From the historical discourse delivered by Dr. Samuel Haskell on the occasion of the re-dedication of the building in which we are now gathered, in June 1871, I find this paragraph: "It is now just forty years (1831) since Thomas W. Merrill came from the eastern part of the state, where he had spent the preceding year, mostly in teaching a select school at Ann Arbor, and commenced his efforts to plant a Baptist church and a Baptist institution of learning in this county. A single log cabin was then the only visible prophesy of Kalamazoo. After a period of teaching and preaching on Prairie Ronde, Mr. Merrill found a companion, in spirit and aims, in Judge Eldred of Climax, and located at Comstock, the center of the county, and the then projected county seat. A church was there formed, now the Galesburg church, the first in Western Michigan, unless some of the Indian missions had a church organization. From that church came some of the members who joined in the organization of this one in Kalamazoo, after the legal and business center of the county became fixed here."

On the fly leaf of the first book of records now in our possession, I find written, "The records of the first six years of the church's history having been lost by fire (as is supposed) while Mr. George Newell was the clerk, a brief minute has been obtained from Mr. Hall and others and been inserted on page 17 of this book." Turning to the page indicated we learn that in June 1835, Rev. Jeremiah Hall came to Mich-

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igan from Vermont, took up his residence in Kalamazoo, and began preaching as a Baptist minister. The places of meeting were in the house of his father-in-law, Ezekiel Ransom, and in the school house which was located about where Burdick and South streets now intersect.

Under date of Sept. 17, 1835, Mr. Hall writes to friends in the east, "In all this region the state of religious feeling is low. The rage for speculation and wealth prevails even among professed Christians, and becomes a great obstacle to the spread of the Gospel. . . . I do not regret having left my delightful situation in the East to come into this country. Though I frequently travel twelve or fifteen miles through the woods to preach in a little log house, yet I always find it filled with attentive hearers and say 'it is good for me to be here.' I only regret that poverty prevents me from travelling and preaching as much as I desire, and the wants of the country demand."

On December 9, 1835, he writes again, "When I left Vermont I had to hire money to pay the expenses of my family to this place. My goods were sent by water to Detroit, and though it is six months since we arrived in Michigan they still remain there because I have been unable to pay the freight. Besides my family have to live and it is difficult to get anything to live on. Wheat is \$1.25 per bushel, corn 75 cents, potatoes 50 cents. Butter 37½ cents per pound, pork \$7.00 per hundred, and rent is as high as in New York City. Our house, embracing kitchen, parlor, study, and all is only 12x14 feet without chamber, and not the most comfortable in other respects, but it is all that we can afford to have."

In February, 1836, the church was regularly organized with fourteen constituent members who

became such by the presentation of their letters and four others who entered into the organization by covenant but whose letters were not in readiness for presentation on that occasion.

The names of the constituent members with the officers whom they chose are as nearly as can now be ascertained as follows:

Rev. Jeremiah Hall (pastor).  
Maj. Ezekiel Ransom (deacon).  
Enoch French (deacon).  
Mrs. Clarissa Hall.  
Mrs. Lucinda Ransom.  
Mrs. French.  
Miss Lois French.  
Mrs. Fanny R. Marsh.  
Mrs. Mary Wilmarth (Woodward.)  
Allen Goodridge.  
Mrs. Lauretta Goodridge.  
Mr. Losey.  
Mrs. Losey.  
Mr. Mowry.  
Mr. Allen.

The first baptisms administered were those of Mr. Roswell Stone and Miss Fanny Marsh (Cahill).

The original plat of the village provided for four squares in the center of the place for public purposes as follows: An Academy square, a Jail square, a Court House square, and a Church square. The Academy and Jail squares have since been united in what is now Ronson Park. The Church square became occupied by church organizations as soon as they were prepared to erect places of worship.

It was doubtless soon after the organization of this church that this one of the four lots on the Church square was chosen by the Baptist people and a small meeting house built upon it. As necessities required,

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the little building was "lengthened out, until its proportions drew upon it the disreputable name of the 'Ball Alley.' It was a pleasant Sabbath home, however, embowered upon this then more open and natural green, and luminous to our hearts" says Dr. Haskell (in his address of 1871) "with bright associations." In 1853 "it drew its slow length along past the corner of Water street, where its relics, the soul having departed, blackening in decay, for many years spoke to a few hearts a tender language." It has now entirely disappeared.

In a few months after the removal of the first building, the new foundations and walls of this structure began to arise. Many were surprised at the seeming vastness of the projected edifice. "All the world wondered." Many said, "Somebody has blundered." But the church could not figure the demands upon them any less, especially as the element of educational demands had to be included. In due time the building was finished and dedicated in 1856. I found no record of the dedicatory exercises.

The walls and foundations are substantial about us today. The last work of an aged hewer of stone, Father Gregg, who was a member of the church at that time, was done on this building and it has answered the bond he gave the church, that they were "Baptist foundations and should never fail."

The cost was about three times what they supposed they could hope to raise being somewhere around \$20,000. The first thought was to build at the cost of \$6,000, "provided so large an amount can be raised." A heavy debt was laid upon the church requiring many years for its entire removal, especially as the carpenter work imposed frequent and heavy expenditures for improvement and repairs.

In 1871 the building was thoroughly remodeled and repaired, so that Dr. Haskell said in the dedicatory service that nothing but the walls of the former structure remained. Time and the defects of the old roof structure had brought them to a crisis, so they arose and put the house into the present condition except for the wall decorations upon the inside, new glass in the side windows, a new roof, and some other changes of minor importance.

The fathers builded well. They planned at least for half a century ahead for it is now nearly sixty years since these walls were planned and it is only within the last two or three years that we have felt that we must have more room. May the next move in the building line be something worthy of those noble men and women who built so wisely and so well for us.

#### ELEVEN PASTORATES.

Let us take a glance now at the church as revealed in the records of the pastorates.

In the days when Rev. Jeremiah Hall was pastor (1836-1843) some difficulty was experienced in raising money for church support as evidenced in a note of June 1842, when the church tendered a vote of thanks to persons in New York state for aiding the church and also thanked the pastor and the trustees for securing this aid. The amount secured is not mentioned but it could not have been large because the same year they made application to the Home Mission Society for assistance to the amount of \$100 and voted to raise the pastor \$250 for the ensuing year. In March 1843, the church voted "that the slips of the Baptist Meeting House be free from this

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date," but it was evidently a financial failure for a few months later they requested the trustees to appraise and rent the 'slips' for the ensuing year. A minute dated Dec. 2, 1843 reads, "Since last report to the association, six persons were dismissed from the church, three added by letter, one baptized, one excluded, one died. Present number 54." That is the first membership record after the organization that I found, and was doubtless the statistical record for the year.

Dr. Hall after leaving Kalamazoo had a pastorate at Granville, Ohio (1851-53) and then became president of Denison University in which office he remained for ten years. He afterwards resided in Kalamazoo for a time. He died at Port Huron, Mich., May 30, 1881.

From 1843 to 1848 the records are both meager and defective. Hence we have very little knowledge of the pastorate of Rev. J. A. B. Stone, D. D. (1843-1849). He was principal of the Michigan and Huron Literary Institute (afterwards Kalamazoo College) and pastor of the church at the same time. Rev. William Lowe Eaton was associate pastor and professor in the institute as well. Dr. Stone is well remembered as a man who laid broad and strong the foundations of the college and who gave twenty of the best years of his life to the upbuilding of that institution.

In 1849, the church requested Mr. Edward Anderson, who had just graduated from Newton Theological Institution, to come and preach for three or six months and if both parties are satisfied, that he remain as pastor. In December the church gave him a call at \$400 per annum and then called a council for Jan. 15, 1850 to ordain him. This council took plenty of time to do its work. It convened and organized on Jan. 15, when the candidate was presented to the

council by Rev. T. Z. R. Jones. They then adjourned till 1 p. m., Jan. 16. The candidate was examined, it was voted to ordain him, and the parts of the public service were assigned. Then they voted to have the public service commence at 10:30 a. m. the day following. It will be interesting to note that on that occasion, Rev. A. A. Ellis of Schoolcraft read the scripture, Rev. Samuel Graves preached the sermon, Rev. J. S. Twiss offered the prayer of ordination and with Rev. J. Harris of South Battle Creek and Rev. Leonard Slater of Ottawa Indian church, performed the service of "laying on of hands," Rev. Wm. Taylor of Schoolcraft gave the charge to the candidate, Rev. E. H. Hamlin gave him the hand of fellowship and Rev. L. H. Moore of Marshall gave the charge to the church. In 1850 they raised the pastor's salary to \$500. Mr. Anderson resigned the pastorate in July 1852. The following vote shows how he was esteemed, "voted that we accept the resignation of Bro. Anderson with the understanding that if, at any time before we have secured another pastor, he shall signify his willingness to return we cheerfully acquiesce." He was subsequently (1859-64) professor of Greek in the College and later was President of Ottawa University, Kansas and still later of McMinnville College, Oregon. He had several pastorates interspersed between these periods of educational service.

Rev. Samuel Haskell accepted the pastorate in September 1852, and in his letter of acceptance appears this paragraph, "And may it appear in our final account with Him, that neither party of us has mistaken the indications of His will, and that entering into this new relation His promise may be verified, "Lo! I am with you always."

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Dr. Haskell's pastorate was a notable one. He not only had the distinction of being here for the longest time of any of the pastors but he proved himself a wise and careful leader, a thoroughly consecrated Christian gentleman and a very thoughtful and thorough Bible teacher and preacher. The imprint of his life is left upon this church. The work of those nearly nineteen years are characterized as years of steady growth and added strength in every way to the church life. During these years there were received into the church 1080 members, 472 of these by baptism. The membership at the close of his work (1871) was 416. In the year 1856, immediately following the dedication of the new church, 87 persons were baptized, many of them students in the College. The years 1858-60 were also harvest years. Dr. Haskell says that in 1858 this house would be filled full at a union prayer meeting at 8 o'clock in the morning, and in 1860 the auditorium would be thronged to its remotest corners by many unaccustomed to be seen here. The congregation would be a mass of throbbing weeping sensitiveness, and men hearing the Gospel, and seeing it in the baptisms of their fellow citizens and friends, had to turn away in tears and confess to their fellows on the street that they "could not stand it."

In 1864 and '65, the most serious trouble that ever came upon the church was experienced in what is now known as the "Stone Trial." For more than two years the church was threatened with disruption, but wise counsel and strong tactful leadership kept the prow of the ship always steady toward the gale, and she finally outrode the storm. As a result of this difficulty 58 persons were dismissed from this church to form the Tabernacle Baptist Church. That church never erected a building. They held meetings in

Fireman's hall on South Burdick street over the stores now numbered 120 and 122, but after a few years the church disintegrated, some of the members coming back to this church and some going into other churches of the city.

Rev. Marvin G. Hodge, D. D. of New York City accepted the pastorate in May 1872. During his six years of service the membership increased from 383 to 487. The organ which has done excellent service ever since was purchased and installed. That the work of Dr. Hodge was a strong work is shown not only from the records but also from the resolutions of regret adopted by the church when he tendered his resignation. One of those resolutions read as follows: "Resolved that we shall cherish with gratitude to God the recollection of these years of faithful service, wise counsel, and uniform devotion to his work as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ." They also expressed the prayer that "in his future service he may have the same abundant blessing which God has bestowed upon him here." In his letter of resignation he says, "My desire is that our relations may end in the same spirit of brotherly love and kindness which has hitherto prevailed."

During the interval between the pastorates of Dr. Hodge and Rev. N. J. Wheeler, Rev. Kendall Brooks, D. D., president of Kalamazoo College supplied the pulpit for several months.

Rev. N. J. Wheeler of Newport, R. I., became pastor in May 1879. During his pastorate of about three years, the most notable things accomplished were the cancelling of a \$7000 debt and the dissolution of what was known as "the society." For many years the church maintained a dual organization, one, the church proper, having charge of the spiritual work, and the other "the society" having to do only with

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the financial and temporal affairs of the church. On January 9th, 1882, the church and society organizations were dissolved, and the church was organized under the laws of the state, adopting Articles of Association. At the close of Mr. Wheeler's pastorate the membership was 440 showing a net decrease of 47 but that this is not a correct indication of his worth is shown in a minute on the records after his resignation which declares "conviction of his faithfulness and diligence as pastor and preacher, confidence in his Christian character and sincere and prayerful good wishes for himself and his family." Mr. Wheeler is still living and resides in Providence, R. I. Though he holds no regular pastorate he preaches nearly every Sunday.

Rev. Henry A. Sawtelle of Chelsea, Mass., accepted the pastorate of this church October 1882. He was here but a year and three months. During that time he greatly endeared himself to this people. He was an able preacher and a sympathetic pastor as some here today well remember. He was full of the spirit of the Gospel and brought the message to his hearers with power. In the fifteen months he was here the membership increased from 440 to 508. In 1882 there was raised in this church and Sunday school \$1555.24 for the purpose of building a house for the Bethel Mission. Dr. Sawtelle resigned Jan. 1, 1884 to accept the pastorate of Zion Baptist Church of San Francisco. In his letter he says that he goes with considerable financial loss to himself but feels the call of God to that field in the West. The resolutions adopted by the church are warm with terms of affection, confidence and admiration.

Rev. Myron W. Haynes came here as pastor in June 1884 and remained four years. These may be characterized as the years of greatest evangelistic ef-

fort in the church's history. The first year he was here he baptised 135 persons (the largest number in any one year in the life of the church) and there was a net gain that year of 147 in the membership. Evangelists Whittle and McGranahan held meetings in the city that winter and a large number were converted. Mr. Haynes was unusually effective in this kind of work and at the close of the pastorate the membership had grown to 769 and in the meantime 60 members had been dismissed (May 1888) to form the Bethel Baptist Church. In 1884 the church voted that for the evening services all seats in the auditorium should be free. Part of the time the galleries were needed to accommodate the congregations. In 1885 the Sunday school which had previously met in the lower rooms was removed to the audience room for larger accommodations.

Rev. J. A. Johnston of Nashua, N. H. was called to the pastorate in Oct. 1888. Of his pastorate of almost ten years, many of you are already well informed. A most genial Christian gentleman and unusually gifted as a sympathetic pastor, Dr. Johnston endeared himself not only to the members of the church but to the city as a whole. He gained the distinction of being called the "pastor at large" so frequently were his services requested for funerals and weddings and social occasions outside the membership of the church. Among the things accomplished during his pastorate were: The deeding by this church to the Bethel church of the lot upon which their building stands; the reorganization of the women's work of the church into the Women's union (1891) which took the place of various organizations and centralized the whole work; the organizing of the young people into the Loyalist Society (1890) which soon changed its name to the B. Y. P. U.; the time

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of holding the covenant meeting was changed (1891) from Saturday afternoon to Thursday evening before the first Sunday of each month; the Portage Street Mission was organized (Dec. 1893) into the Portage Street Baptist Church when 38 members were dismissed to form that church and a deed given them of the property they occupied.

When Dr. Johnston closed his work the membership was 764, five less than at the beginning but in the meantime many had been dismissed to form the Portage Street Church and a revision of the membership list resulted in erasing a large number of names of members whose addresses had been hopelessly lost.

In the interval before the next pastor was called the church practically made all the seats free and decided to depend entirely upon free-will offerings for the support of the church.

Rev. George D. Adams began his pastorate in Jan. 1899. He remained only about two years but during that time the greater part of a \$2,000 debt which had been accumulating for some time past was wiped out. He was an enthusiastic and energetic leader and preacher. He resigned to accept the presidency of Des Moines College. At the close of his service here the membership numbered 716.

It will hardly be necessary for me to say anything today concerning the present pastorate which began March 9, 1902. It may be a matter of interest, however, to say that during these nine years 627 members have been received into the church and the membership has increased from 672 to 845.

While it is not possible to ascertain the exact number of persons who have been received into this church since the beginning, yet as nearly as can be determined it is about 3723.

### OUR WAR RECORD.

During the years preceding the Civil War, the anti-slavery spirit was clearly manifest in the membership of the church. When the war broke out, threatening the union between the north and south, the men and youth of this church willingly offered themselves upon their country's altar. It is definitely known that forty-one members of the church enlisted in the service, ranking from private to lieutenant-colonel. Seven of them lost their lives during the struggle. It has been discovered also that fifty-two others, connected with the families of this church and congregation, were soldiers in that war, ten falling martyrs to the cause. This makes a total of ninety-three in the service, with seventeen deaths. "Others" says Dr. Haskell, "were engaged in the work of the commissions, while on the part of all the sympathy was intense, the prayers were constant, and the helps untiring and generous."

### OUR MISSIONARY RECORD.

We are not ashamed of the record made by our church in carrying out the Great Commission of Christ. While we have doubtless fallen far short of our full duty and our highest privilege, we have not been indifferent to the claims of those who dwell in the regions beyond.

In 1850 the church voted to request the pastor "to preach during the year upon the subjects of foreign and home missions, ministerial education, and Bible distribution." This does not mean that no attention was paid to these objects before that time neither does it indicate that no offerings had been taken for them previous to 1850 for the records clearly indicate oth-

erwise. It merely shows an increase of missionary spirit in the church.

It would be interesting to know how much had been given for the foreign and for the home work during the seventy-five years but the defective records forbid accurate information. It may be said, however, that every year during the last half century and more, the church has made some attempt each year to fulfill its obligation with an offering.

In the matter of sending out workers into the harvest fields, we have also done something. The number of those who have entered home mission work from this church, I am unable to ascertain, but from personal knowledge of some of our membership, it is known that the list would make a very creditable showing both in numbers and in the character of the work accomplished. And it must not be overlooked that the present efficient Field Secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Rev. Lemuel C. Barnes, D. D., was a member of this church and received ordination here in 1878, the pastor, Rev. M. G. Hodge, D. D., preaching the sermon.

The church has also sent workers into foreign fields and we have reason to feel proud of our representatives among the peoples who "sat in darkness." Rev. J. S. Boyden, for years the District secretary of the Missionary Union (now Foreign Mission Society) has compiled the following list of foreign missionaries who have held membership in our church.

Miss Lida Scott married Rev. A. J. Lyon, who was under appointment to Bhamo, Upper Burmah, and went out in 1878. Mr. Lyon died soon after reaching the mission field. Mrs. Lyon afterwards married Rev. Wm. Ashmore, Jr., and they are now laboring at Swatow, China.

Dr. Carrie H. Daniells went out in 1878 to Swatow, China, and was the first woman medical missionary sent out by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the West. Died 1904.

Miss Francis E. Palmer went in 1880 to Burmah. After 15 years service returned to this country because of failing health.

Miss Alice Voorhorst went in 1885 to Japan as wife of Rev. A. Ottmans of the Reform Church.

Rev. George W. Taft and wife, Mary Boyden Taft went in 1889 to Japan. Mrs. Taft died in Japan in 1890.

Miss Belle Richards went to Africa in 1891 as wife of Rev. F. R. Bunker of the Congregational Board.

Prof. L. E. Martin and wife, Nellora Clough Martin, went in 1891 to teach in Ongole College, South India, of which school Mr. Martin is now the principal.

Miss Ongola Clough went in 1892 to South India as wife of Rev. A. H. Curtiss.

Rev. Frank Kurtz and wife, Elizabeth Fletcher Kurtz, went in 1893 to South India.

Rev. Willard F. Dowd and wife, Muriel Massey Dowd, went in 1900 to Assam.

Rev. G. J. Huisenga went in 1900 to South India.

Rev. C. L. Maxfield went in 1904 to Philippine Islands.

Rev. A. J. Weeks and wife, Louise Scrimger Weeks went to Burmah in 1905.

Rev. J. H. Scott and wife of Japan for a number of years held membership in this church while on the foreign field.

Mrs. Stella Fisher Burgess a member of this church while in college is in China where her husband is a Y. M. C. A. secretary.

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MISS JENNIE CODY A MEMBER WITH US WHILE IN COL-  
LEGE IS A MISSIONARY IN CHINA.

### BENEVOLENCES.

As late as 1852 the church was receiving aid from the Home Mission Society to enable it to pay its pastor a salary of \$600 a year but since then the church has regularly contributed to missions and to benevolent objects. The entire amount it is impossible to ascertain but it is safe to say that the money contributed by the Home Mission Society to the church during those early years has been returned to its treasury many times over in contributions from this church. Dr. Haskell said at the close of his pastorate that according to his memoranda, not less than \$40,000 had gone to objects outside the church during the nineteen years, while about \$25,000 had been raised for building purposes. Since 1871 the amounts contributed for benevolence each year are not always recorded in the minutes but a thorough search in Association minutes and convention Annuals and careful estimates reveal that not far from \$60,000 have been contributed by the church for benevolent objects, making a grand total of about \$100,000 for the 75 years.

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Unfortunately, only now and then is there a mention of the Sunday school in the records. Many able men have been superintendents of the school such as Dr. J. A. B. Stone, Prof. Edward Olney, Prof. Daniel Putnam, Dr. Samuel Graves, Prof. Samuel Brooks, not to mention many others of more recent

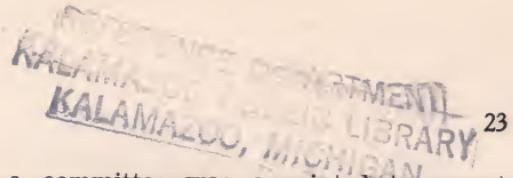
date. During the construction of this building, 1853-6, the Sunday School held its sessions part of the time in Fireman's Hall and part of the time in the Court House. The Sunday School has had a steady growth. First it outgrew the lower rooms of the church and was removed to this room and now the school is too large for both floors and if another class should be organized there would be no convenient place for it to be taught. The records show that a large percent of those who have been baptized into the church during these seventy-five years have come from the Sunday School. What a testimony concerning the value of that part of the church's work!

### Some Interesting Things in the Early Records

In 1853, the church voted to request the deacons "to procure unadulterated wine for the communion service."

In the same year they "voted to allow all persons paying their subscriptions before due, ten per cent interest on all sums so arranged until they fall due." What a suggestion for the financial boards of present day churches!

When the new church was erected in 1856 the "slips" or pews were sold at public auction to raise money, for building purposes. When the structure was planned it was reckoned that the "slips" would be worth about \$83 each. Whether they sold for that I have not been able to ascertain. Those who bought the pews owned them and re-rented them and put the money into their pockets. There are some here today who rented seats from private individuals at that time.



In 1855, a committee was appointed to report upon the befitting posture in worship. It reported that it would be proper to stand during prayer and sit while singing. Whether they feared the pastor might pray too much at length or whether it was for some other reason I am not able to say, but a couple of weeks later, they voted to bow during prayer and stand while singing.

In January 1856, they recommended that members procure copies of the "Congregational Psalmist" to be used in the worship of the Sabbath and requested the choir to select tunes from that book if they could conveniently do so, twice on each Sabbath, viz: for the first singing in the morning and the last in the afternoon in order that all the congregation may have an opportunity of joining in this important part of the worship of God.

In 1857, a committee appointed to secure a person to play the melodian, among other things reported as follows: "Your committee are unanimously of the opinion that the public singing of the sanctuary should be very largely conducted by the members of the church and that congregational singing, which they believe accords best with the spirit of sanctuary worship, should be as fully realized as possible. They believe that the church should encourage all its members who can sing or who have the voice and ear for music to improve these gifts as a religious duty and employ them in the service of God. Why should not the gift of song be dedicated by the Christian to the service of God as religiously as the gift of prayer? Why should not those in the church sing, who can sing, as much as those who can exhort and preach should exercise their functions?"

To show how the church in those days looked upon the question of amusements, I found in the rec-

ords of 1857, where a man was waited upon by a committee because it was reported that he had been "walking disorderly" in attending a circus, theatrical performances, and races. He acknowledged that he had attended a circus but not the others. He said he was "sorry and that he will not attend again if it is a grief to his brothers and sisters, although he did not see the harm so far as he was individually concerned." This was evidently not satisfactory to the church for at a subsequent meeting he was present and said there was a change in his feelings and the church voted that they were satisfied with his evidences of penitence.

Before the new church was built in 1856, the ordinance of baptism was administered in the river. The time of year seemed to make little difference if there were candidates ready for the ordinance. This entry of Jan. 15 (mid-winter), 1853 was not an unusual one: "At the close of the afternoon service, repaired to the waterside where the ordinance of baptism was administered."

It is a matter of historical interest to know that the large elm trees growing on the church lot west of this building were planted by Rev. J. S. Boyden and others in the spring of 1853.

### SOME OF GOD'S NOBLEMEN.

"Others have labored and ye have entered into their labors." A large volume of interesting and important history might be written about men and women who have wrought for God on this sacred spot, during the past seventy-five years. I have already spoken of the pastors. They did not labor alone. Some of God's noblest spirits have stood beside them upholding their hands.

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MAJOR EZEKIEL RANSOM

The first deacon of the church was Major Ezekiel Ransom, born in Colchester, Conn., Oct. 1, 1763. Just previous to the Revolutionary War the family moved to Shelburne Falls, Mass. When only 14 years of age he enlisted in the Revolutionary War with a Vermont militia company commanded by Capt. Samuel Fletcher. He fought in the expedition against Crown Point and in the battles of Bennington and Saratoga and was present at the surrender of Burgoyne after which event he returned to his father's home in Shelburne Falls. He soon after enlisted with the Massachusetts troops of the continental line and continued in the army until the close of the war. For a time he was on the non-commissioned staff of General Washington. He fought in most of the battles of the Virginia Campaign and was present at the execution of Major Andre.

On March 25th, 1791, he married Lucinda Fletcher, daughter of General Samuel Fletcher and in 1835 emigrated to the territory of Michigan locating in the town of Bronson, now Kalamazoo. He bought a farm, the dwelling house of which was located at the southwest corner of Park and Academy streets, where he lived until his death Nov. 1, 1838 at the age of 75 years.

After coming to Kalamazoo, Major Ransom turned his attention to educational matters in which he was always greatly interested. He with others was instrumental in founding the Michigan and Huron Literary Institute which afterwards became Kalamazoo College.

He is described as a tall muscular man of great strength and activity, of commanding presence, and to the last showing a military bearing. He was dig-

nified in conversation, liberal and charitable in his relations with his fellowmen and beloved by all who knew him.

Major Ransom was first buried in the old cemetery south of the city and later the remains were removed to Mountain Home Cemetery. On May 30th, 1907, the local chapter of the D. A. R. procured a marker from the national organization for his grave and placed it with appropriate exercises. Two hundred and fifty school children, each carrying a small flag marched past the grave and deposited the flags upon it as a part of the beautiful and impressive services. Every year, on Memorial Day, the grave is decorated by the local chapter of the D. A. R. It is thought that Deacon Ransom is the only Revolutionary soldier buried in a Kalamazoo cemetery.

#### FLETCHER O. MARSH

The first records of the church now in our possession are signed "Fletcher Marsh, clerk." I find that in Oct. 1842 the church recommended him "to the patronage of the Baptist State Convention for aid in obtaining an education preparatory to entering the Christian ministry." He was a nephew of the first pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Hall. He went to Newton Theological Institution after graduating at the University of Michigan and then was pastor for a time at Coldwater. From there he Went to Denison University where he was a professor for many years, and connected with that college till 1875.

#### LEONARD SLATER

Visitors to Riverside Cemetery will notice as they stroll up the driveway northward from the entrance

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on Seminary street, that on the slope to the west is a peculiar group of five trees. Four arbor vitae trees are arranged in a square, something less than twenty feet apart, while in the exact center is a thriving young buckeye. Connecting the outer trees are ridges, deeply sodded over, showing the outlines of a long-abandoned foundation of a house. This is the site of the old Rix Robinson Indian trading post built about 1823. Of this spot an early writer says: "In May 1826 a young missionary on his way to the Carey mission, on the St. Joseph river, there to begin a life-work of teaching the Gospel to the Indians, arrived at the summit of the hill that rose before the entrance of the old post. It was near nightfall and, tired with his long tramp upon the trail, he stopped, laid down his knapsack and staff, prepared for rest, and was not long in finding tired nature's sweet restorer—balmy sleep.

"In the morning he arose and continued his journey, but the glorious scene that met his gaze when he turned it westward was never effaced from his mind, and years after, when he knew he must soon rest from life's pilgrimage, he desired that the place where he halted on that May evening should be his resting place, and there Leonard Slater sleeps, after forty years devotion to his Master's cause." A few paces from the trees is a dark monument which reads: "In Memoriam. Leonard Slater. Born in Worcester, Mass., Nov. 16, 1802. Died April 27, 1866."

He labored many years among the red men and when they were removed to the west, he came and spent his last years (1853-66) as a worker in this church. He filled many places of responsibility in the church and is remembered still by many of the older residents of the city.

And what shall I more say? For time will fail me to tell of J. O. Marsh, and S. H. Ransom, and Wm. Carter, and John Cadman, and Edward Olney, and Daniel Putnam, and Henry Stanwood, and D. T. Fox, and T. Z. R. Jones, and J. A. Clark, and Samuel Graves and Wm. Allis, and Francis Colman, and E. G. Huntington, and L. H. Trowbridge, and H. L. Wayland, and John M. Gregory, and Kendall Brooks, and Theodore Nelson, and U. D. Wheaton, and J. Potter, and Haskell Triskett, and Silas Bailey, and C. D. Hanscomb, and H. Dennison, and W. B. Southard and a host of others who together with their wives (whose names do not often appear but whose work is evident) "these all having had witness born to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfector of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

### THE PRESENT PASTORATE.

(After the delivery of the historical address, various members of the church expressed the feeling that if the address were published in permanent form there should be some account of the present pastorate inserted. And so I have prepared, with some hesitancy, the following account:)

The present pastorate can hardly be said to be marked by any special feature. The work has been going on steadily with gradually accumulating strength

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in numbers and resources. There have been no remarkable revival periods. In 1907 there was held a markable revival periods. In 1907 there was held in the city a series of two weeks of union meetings under Evangelists Gray and Towner and in 1909, Dr. James A. Francis assisted the pastor in two weeks of meetings. These did much good although no large ingathering resulted. A large per cent of the increase in membership has come from the Sunday school. The net growth in membership has been 173 and in the reports of the churches last year our stood second in the state.

Our benevolences have increased gradually so that nearly every year shows a gain over the preceding year. Our associational reports show that we gave in 1902 for foreign missions \$249.69, for home missions \$160.98, for state missions \$77.43. In 1910 we gave for foreign missions \$600.74, for home missions \$479.12 and for state missions \$189.71. The total raised for these three objects since 1902 is as follows: foreign missions \$4874.51; home missions \$3260.20; state missions \$1113.80. In 1909 we adopted the duplex envelope system for offerings and have found it a help in missionary collections.

In addition to meeting our current expense account in full each year a few other things involving financial outlay have been accomplished. In 1904 we put a new roof on the building, repaired and painted the exterior, redecorated the interior, placed new carpets on both floors, and made other minor changes. In 1907 we paid off a debt of \$500 upon which the church had been paying interest for about ten years and at the same time installed a motor to pump the organ. New hymn-books for church services, for Sunday school, and for mid-week meetings have been purchased. We have now about \$4000 in cash and

pledges as a nucleus for building purposes. It has not been determined whether we shall erect a complete new building or remodel the present structure and build a Sunday school house.

The Sunday school has grown until it now has the largest average attendance it ever had. The last convention reports show that it now stands first in average attendance among the Baptist schools of the state.

The women of the church organized into the Women's Union have done steady and faithful work. Their programs have covered the whole field of missionary activity. They have gathered funds and given assistance in every philanthropic, missionary, and material enterprise of the church.

The Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Baptist Young People's Unions are well organized and doing excellent work among the young people of various ages.

One thing that may be said to characterize our work perhaps more than any other is the spirit of harmony and good will and this has been no small factor in whatever measure of success has been attained.



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